Simon Ockley

(1678-1720) Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge.

- "One thing particularly deserving to be noticed is that his mother was delivered of him at Mecca, in the very temple itself; which never happened to any one else."
  [*History of the Saracens*, London, 1894, p. 331]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Washington Irving

(1783-1859) Well-known as the "first American man of letters".

- "He was of the noblest branch of the noble race of Koreish. He possessed the three qualities most prized by Arabs: courage, eloquence, and munificence. His intrepid spirit had gained him from the prophet the appellation of The Lion of God, specimens of his eloquence remain in some verses and sayings preserved among the Arabs; and his munificence was manifested in sharing among others, every Friday, what remained in the treasury. Of his magnanimity, we have given repeated instances; his noble scorn of everything false and mean, and the absence in his conduct of everything like selfish intrigue."
  [*Lives of the Successors of Mahomet*, London, 1850, p. 165]

- "He was one of the last and worthiest of the primitive Moslems, who imbibed his religious enthusiasm from companionship with the Prophet himself, and followed to the last the simplicity of his example. He is honourably spoken of as the first Caliph who accorded some protection to Belles-Lettres. He indulged in the poetic vein himself, and many of his maxims and proverbs are preserved, and have been translated in various languages. His signet bore this inscription: 'The kingdom belongs to God'. One of his sayings shows the little value he set upon the transitory glories of this world, 'Life is but the shadow of a cloud - the dream of a sleeper'."
  [*Lives of the Successors of Mahomet*, London, 1850, pp. 187-8]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Robert Durey Osborn

(1835-1889) Major of the Bengal Staff Corps.

- "With him perished the truest hearted and best Moslem of whom Mohammadan history had preserved the remembrance."
  [*Islam Under the Arabs*, 1876, p. 120]

To find out more about Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib, visit:

http://al-islam.org/faq/

v1.0

God thus makes clear his signs to you
that you may understand
(Qur'an 2:242)

What Non-Muslims Say About ...

'Ali

THE FIRST SUCCESSOR OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(Peace and Blessings be Upon Them Both)

Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib was the successor to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon them both. This is a collection of short quotations about him from a wide variety of notables belonging to other faiths, including academics, writers, philosophers, poets, politicians, and activists.

Thomas Carlyle

(1795-1881) Scottish historian, critic, and sociological writer.

- "As for this young Ali, one cannot but like him. A noble-minded creature, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards; full of affection, of fiery daring. Something chivalrous in him; brave as a lion; yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian knighthood."
  [*On Heroes, Hero-Worship, And The Heroic In History*, 1841, Lecture 2: The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam., May 8, 1840)]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Edward Gibbon

(1737-1794) Considered the greatest British historian of his time.

- "The zeal and virtue of Ali were never outstripped by any recent proselyte. He united the qualifications of a poet, a soldier, and a saint; his wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings; and every antagonist, in the combats of the tongue or of the sword, was subdued by his eloquence and valour. From the first hour of his mission to the last rites of his funeral, the apostle was never forsaken by a generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent, and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses."
  [*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London, 1911, volume 5, pp. 381-2]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Philip Khuri Hitti

(1886-1978) Professor of Semitic Languages at Princeton University

- "Valiant in battle, wise in counsel, eloquent in speech, true to his friends, magnanimous to his foes, he became both the paragon of Muslim nobility and chivalry (*futuwah*) and the Solomon of Arabic tradition, around whose name poems, proverbs, sermonettes and anecdotes innumerable have clustered."
  [*History of the Arabs*, London, 1964, p. 183]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Sir William Muir

(1819 - 1905) Scottish scholar and statesman. Held the post of Foreign Secretary to the Indian government as well asLieutenant Governor of the Northwestern Provinces.

- "Endowed with a clear intellect, warm in affection, and confiding in friendship, he was from the boyhood devoted heart and soul to the Prophet. Simple, quiet, and unambitious, when in after days he obtained the rule of half of the Moslem world, it was rather thrust upon him than sought."
  [*The Life of Mahomet*, London, 1877, p. 250]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Dr. Henry Stubbe

(1632-1676) Classicist, polemicist, physician, and philosopher.

- "He had a contempt of the world, its glory and pomp, he feared God much, gave many alms, was just in all his actions, humble and affable; of an exceeding quick wit and of an ingenuity that was not common, he was exceedingly learned, not in those sciences that terminate in speculations but those which extend to practice."
  [*An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, 1705, p. 83]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Gerald de Gaury

(1897 - 1984) A distinguished soldier and diplomat.

- "He had been wise in counsel and brave in battle, true to his friends and magnanimous to his foes. He was to be for ever the paragon of Muslim nobility and chivalry."
  [*Rulers of Mecca*, London, 1951, p. 49]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Wilferd Madelung

Professor of Arabic at Oxford University

- "In face of the fake Umayyad claim to legitimate sovereignty in Islam as God's Vicegerents on earth, and in view of Umayyad treachery, arbitrary and divisive government, and vindictive retribution, they came to appreciate his honesty, his unbending devotion to the reign of Islam, his deep personal loyalties, his equal treatment of all his supporters, and his generosity in forgiving his defeated enemies."
  [*The succession to Muhammad: a study of the early caliphate*, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 309-310]

✶ ✶ ✶ ✶ ✶

Charles Mills

(1788 - 1826) Leading historical writer of his time.

- "As the chief of the family of Hashem and as the cousin and son-in-law of him whom the Arabians respected …, it is apparently wonderful that Ali was not raised to the Caliphate immediately on the death of Mohammad. To the advantages of his birth and marriage was added the friendship of the Prophet. The son of Abu Talib was one of the first converts to Islamism and Mohammad's favourite appellation of his was the Aaron of a second Moses. His talents as an orator, and his intrepidity as a warrior, were grateful to a nation in whose judgement courage was virtue and eloquence was wisdom."
  [*An history of Muhammedanism*, London, 1818, p. 89]